



## Raleigh Planning Commission Strategic Planning Committee

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Agenda for **Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at 11 am.**

**Location:** Room 305, Raleigh Municipal Building, 222 West Hargett Street, Avery C. Upchurch Government Complex, Raleigh, North Carolina. For information call 996-2626 (Planning Department).

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**These items will be discussed during the meeting:**

### **Zoning District Frontages and Build-to Requirements**

At its last several meetings, the Strategic Planning Committee discussed issues related to frontage, the use of equivalent zoning conditions, and potential options for amending the Comprehensive Plan and/or Unified Development Ordinance. The Committee will continue their discussion of these frontage issues – as well as items related to build-to requirements for certain building types – at this meeting.



*City of Raleigh  
North Carolina*

**DATE:** May 17, 2016

**TO:** Rodney Swink, Chair  
Members of the Strategic Planning Committee

**FROM:** Bynum Walter, AICP, Senior Planner  
Charles Dillard, Planner II  
Vivian Ekstrom, Planner II

**SUBJECT:** Zoning District Frontages and Build-to Requirements

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At its April meeting, the Strategic Planning Committee continued its discussion of frontage/urban form issues and potential UDO changes. Beginning in October, the Committee began discussing a number of topics, and in February voted out recommendations on four items related to frontage:

- Parking structures in urban frontages
- Pedestrian entrance spacing requirements
- Parking Limited frontages mapped on Transit Emphasis Corridors
- Townhouse and apartment building type build-to requirements

For parking structure regulations for properties in urban frontages, the committee recommended amending the UDO text as suggested by staff (see suggested amendments in the reference information section). For pedestrian entrance spacing requirements for properties with a frontage, the committee recommended keeping the regulations as is; the administrative alternate process seems to provide appropriate relief for property owners/developers that are unable to comply with these standards. For signage regulations in the Parking Limited frontage, the committee recommended keeping the regulations as is; the prohibition of medium-profile and high-profile ground signs seems appropriate for these areas. For the townhouse and apartment building type build-to requirements, the committee recommended expanding the build-to range from 10'- 30' to 10'- 50'; in addition, the committee recommended including language in the ultimate report to City Council that recognizes frontage as the most desirable tool for regulating a building's relationship to the public realm.

At its most recent April meeting, the Committee voted out a recommendation on a possible amendment to the UDO to prohibit Administrative Alternates in cases where equivalent zoning conditions are offered.

The remaining item was discussed at the April meeting and will be discussed at this May meeting:

- Detached (DE-) frontage lot size, building size, and use regulations

## **Remaining item for discussion and recommendation**

### Detached Frontage (-DE) lot, coverage and building type regulations

Detached Frontage is intended for areas adjacent to roadways transitioning from residential to commercial. It accommodates neighborhood-scaled, low intensity commercial uses while maintaining the residential character of the street right-of-way. General buildings are prohibited in -DE districts, but apartment buildings are allowed. While the intent of -DE is to promote residential scale, low-intensity, mixed use, the frontage regulations are limited and do not prohibit assemblage of parcels or an entire block face for a large apartment building. To wit, -DE contains no side yard minimum, maximum lot width or land use restrictions.

In particular, staff sees the possibility of combining revised Detached frontage regulations with the RX-3/RX-4 districts to address “missing middle” housing. This typically refers to small multi-family buildings, courtyard apartments, and cottage courts. The idea is to accommodate modest density in building types that serve as a transition between lower density residential and more intense development.

Staff offers a few options for consideration that would reposition the Detached frontage regulations and encourage smaller multi-family housing developments where the Detached frontage is mapped. Staff suggests the following revisions to the Detached frontage regulations as a starting point for discussion:

1. Add a side yard requirement of between 5’ and 10’ (for Apartment and Civic Building Types only).

The current setback minimums for the apartment and civic building types would permit a zero-side setback when the building is constructed in a non-combustible manner. The increase in minimum side yard setbacks will ensure physical separation between properties.

2. Add a maximum building footprint to Detached frontage of 4,000 sq. ft.

There is no maximum standard for building footprint associated with the Detached frontage or any other frontage. Creating this standard will ensure that the intent of the frontage is achieved. Staff has determined that 353 of 372 properties (95%) with adopted -DE frontage comply with this proposed standard.

3. Prohibit retail in RX- districts with -DE frontages.

The RX district currently allows a small amount of ancillary retail in an apartment building. The retail use must be located in a corner unit at the corner of two streets; cannot exceed 4,000 square feet in area; is limited to a certain palette of uses; and has

limited hours of operation. This prohibition on retail in the RX district when the Detached frontage is mapped will ensure that these smaller multi-family developments are compatible with any adjacent low density residential.

4. Add a maximum number for an uninterrupted row of townhouses; i.e. maximum of 4 or 5 townhouses in one uninterrupted row.

There is no limit to the number of attached townhouses in any zoning district. The introduction of a standard would ensure that the bulk and mass of a townhouse with the Detached frontage is compatible with the intent of the frontage. Staff suggests a maximum of five attached townhomes for the RX district with Detached frontage. A typical townhouse is 16-20 feet wide. This would produce a building face of between 80 and 100 feet in length.

Two additional revisions were considered and discussed in previous meetings. The first of these is a maximum lot width requirement of 100 feet. This option remains open to discussion. The second was a potential maximum lot size in DE- districts. The side yard and building footprint requirements above most directly and simply address the issue of scale.

Attached are maps providing reference for the above items:

- Map 1: Detached Frontage Properties
- Map 2: Detached Frontage Properties (Aerial)
- Map 3: Base Zoning for Detached Properties
- Map 4: Zoning Overlays on Detached Frontage Properties
- Map 5: Current Land Use on Detached Frontage Properties
- Map 6: Building Footprint Size on Detached Frontage Properties
- Map 7: Lot Width on Detached Frontage properties.

### **Reference information on items for which the Committee has made recommendations**

The Committee has previously discussed these items and offered a recommendation. The items are listed below, as information.

#### Parking structures in urban frontages

At the January meeting, committee members discussed potential updates to the UDO to address concerns about parking structure design. There was some interest in expanding these design standards to parking structures throughout the city, not just on properties with an urban frontage. This could potentially be accomplished by requiring all parking structures to comply with regulations that address screening of upper stories (#3 – 4 in the list below), but leaving out regulations related to active uses on the ground floor for properties outside of downtown or without an urban frontage.

With respect to the design of parking structures on urban frontages, the general requirements (Sec. 3.4.2) regarding structured parking are an obstacle to achieving unconditioned frontage application. Zoning Case Z-1-15 (Dillon Supply) illustrates the prevalence of such obstacles. Staff has identified a number of options for addressing this issue, and suggests the following changes as a first attempt at revising:

1. The **portion of the** ground story of structured parking **necessary to meet the build-to requirement of the frontage** must have active uses (such as, but not limited to, residential, commercial, office or civic space) located between the parking structure and any public sidewalk.
2. **Where the ground floor of structured parking is not screened by active uses, it must be fully enclosed so that cars are not visible from the right-of-way, and clad in materials used in the active frontage of the deck and any attached building.**
3. Where upper stories of structured parking are located at the perimeter of a building, they must be screened so that cars are not visible from adjacent streets. Sloped ramps cannot be discernible along the perimeter of the parking structure. Architectural and vegetative screens must be used to articulate the façade, hide parked vehicles and shield lighting. In addition, the ground floor ~~façade treatment~~ (building materials; ~~windows and architectural detailing~~) shall be continued on upper stories.
4. Upper stories of parking structure facades shall be designed with both vertical (façade rhythm of 20 feet to 30 feet) and horizontal articulation (aligning with horizontal elements along the block).

Alternatively, parking structure regulations could be removed from their current location in Sec. 3.4 – Frontage Requirements, and relocated to untie them from frontage regulations. Either option would result in parking structure regulations being applied more broadly than just in areas with an urban frontage:

1. Relocating parking structure regulations to UDO Chapter 1, Article 5 – Measurement, Exceptions & General Rules of Applicability
2. Relocating parking structure requirements to Article 3.5 - Transitions
3. Applying parking structure design regulations to those in –DX districts only

#### Pedestrian entrance spacing requirements

Urban Frontages (-SH, -UG, -UL, and -GR) contain maximum street-facing entrance spacing distances. These range from 50’ in Shopfront frontage to 100’ in Green frontage. These distance regulations are overly prescriptive and are not conducive to some retail typologies, particularly larger-format uses such as grocery stores. The UDO does provide the option of an administrative alternate for pedestrian access requirements ([Section 1.5.8](#)). The Committee could also consider other options for revising these spacing requirements based on square footage of the particular use or the provision of other design features that help mitigate the impact of less frequent pedestrian entrances (e.g. additional transparency, additional streetscape amenities, public art, walk-up windows, etc.)

#### Signage regulations in Parking Limited Frontage (-PL)

UDO Article 7.3 – Signs provides regulations for signage based on zoning district and frontage. An expressed concern of the development community is the prohibition of medium- and high-profile signs under Parking Limited frontage. Such restrictions are intended to ensure pedestrian safety and comfort, while also de-cluttering streetscapes. Staff does not recommend an amendment to the regulations, but the Committee could consider an amendment to allow such signs on a limited or regulated basis.

#### Townhouse and Apartment building type build-to requirements

Related to Frontage, but a separate issue is Building Type build-to requirements. Under the UDO, Townhouses and Apartments are required to have a build-to between 10 and 30 feet,

regardless of context. Concerns have arisen that such a build-to is not appropriate on major streets in suburban locations. Staff would like the Committee to consider possible solutions.

#### Equivalent Zoning Conditions and Frontage

Regarding equivalent zoning conditions, staff has identified one possible amendment that could promote a more uniform application of frontage:

- Administrative Alternates - a prohibition on the use of Administrative Alternates in cases where equivalent zoning conditions are offered would encourage zoning applicants to provide one of the seven defined frontages. Such a prohibition could promote application of a defined frontage and would help eliminate uncertainty from the perspective of city staff and government.

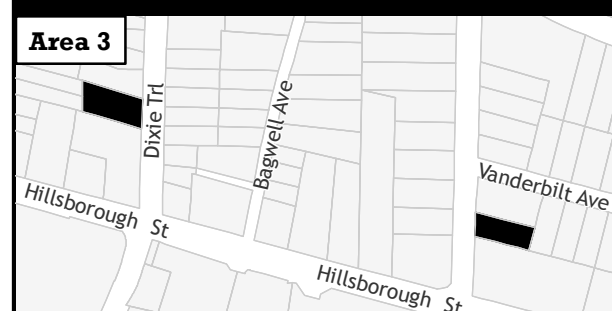
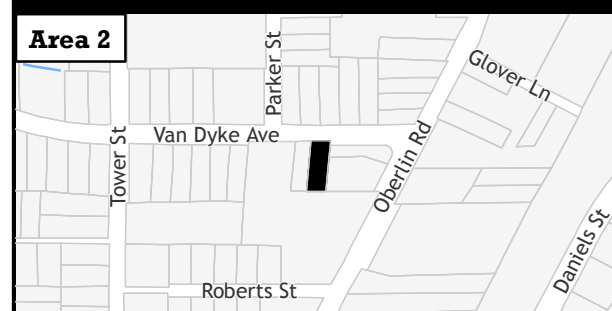


# Detached Frontage Properties

- Properties with -DE Frontage
- Downtown Plan Area

1 inch = 500 feet

0 125 250 500 750 1,000 Feet



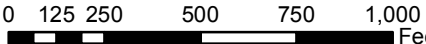




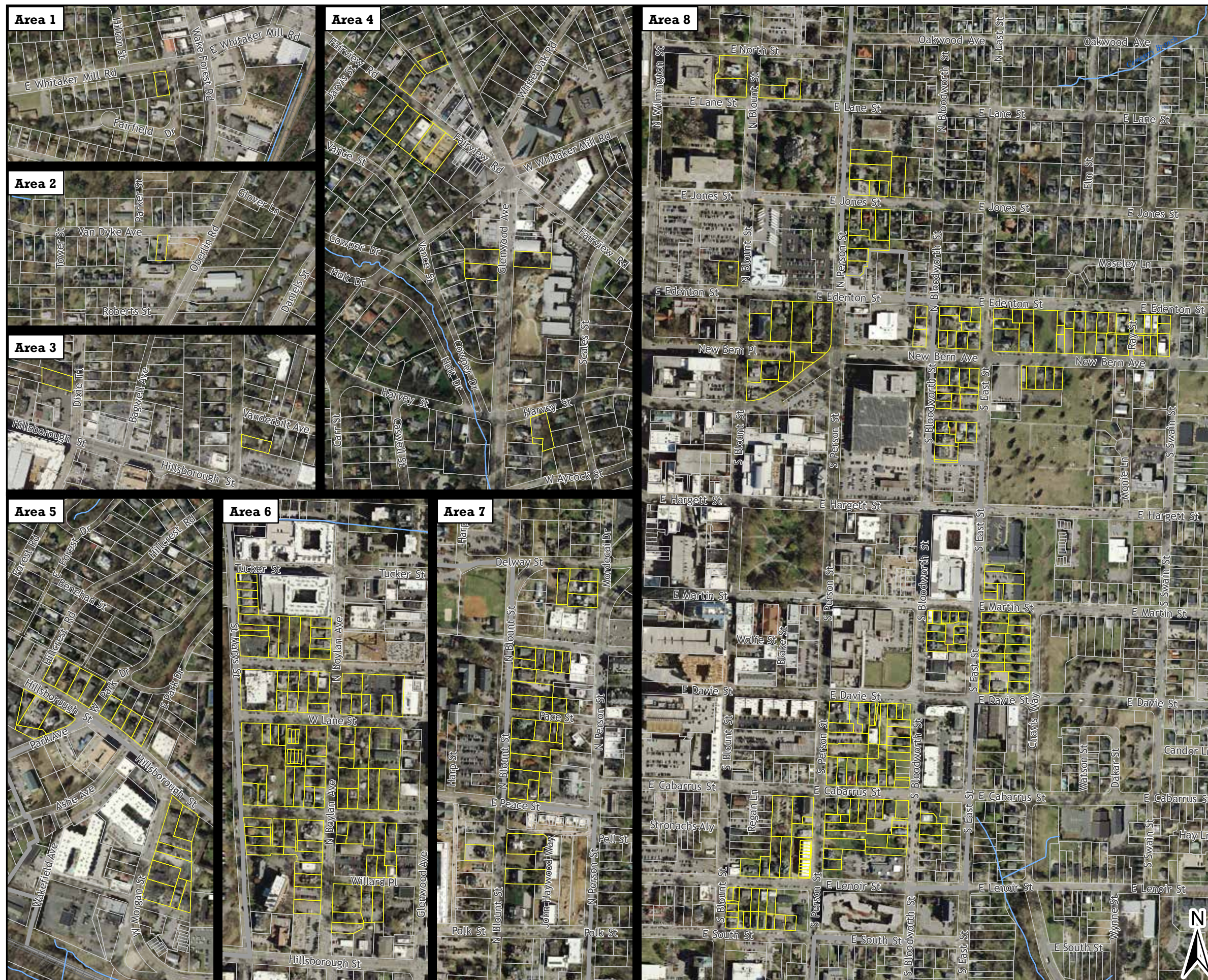
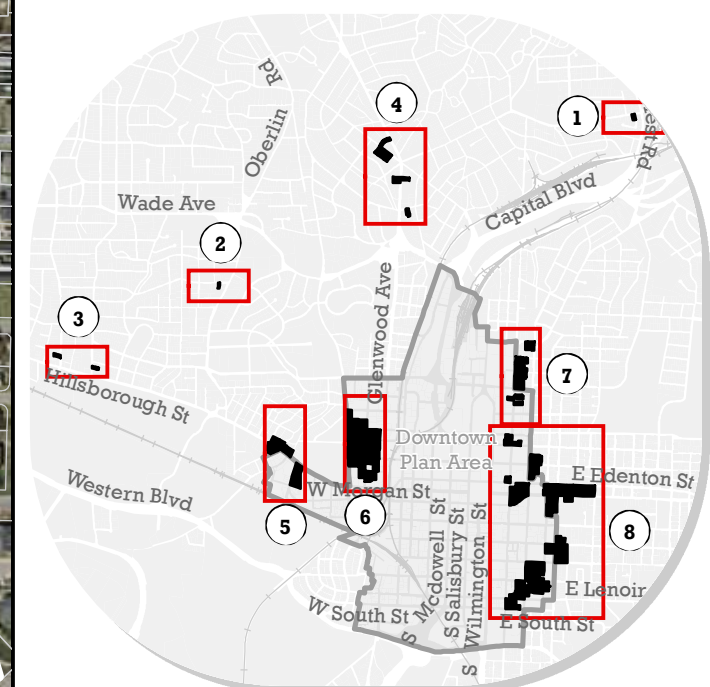
# Detached Frontage 2015 Aerials

-  -DE Properties
-  Downtown Plan Area

1 inch = 500 feet



0 125 250 500 750 1,000 Feet



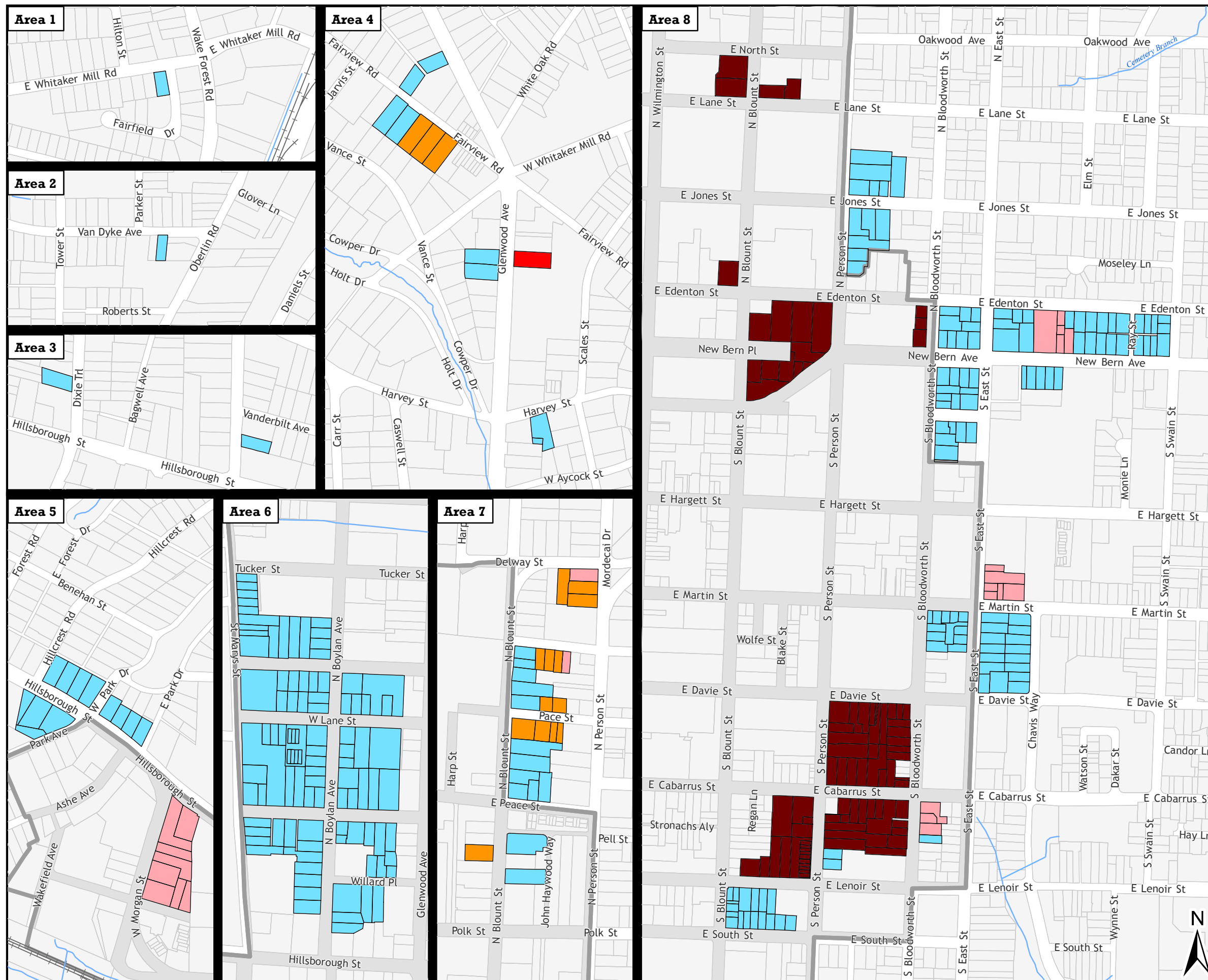




# Detached Frontage Base Zoning

- DE Properties
- Downtown Plan Area
- Zoning of -DE Parcels**
- Residential Mixed Use (RX-)
- Office Mixed Use (OX-)
- Neighborhood Mixed Use (NX-)
- Commercial Mixed Use (CX-)
- Downtown Mixed Use (DX-)

1 inch = 500 feet





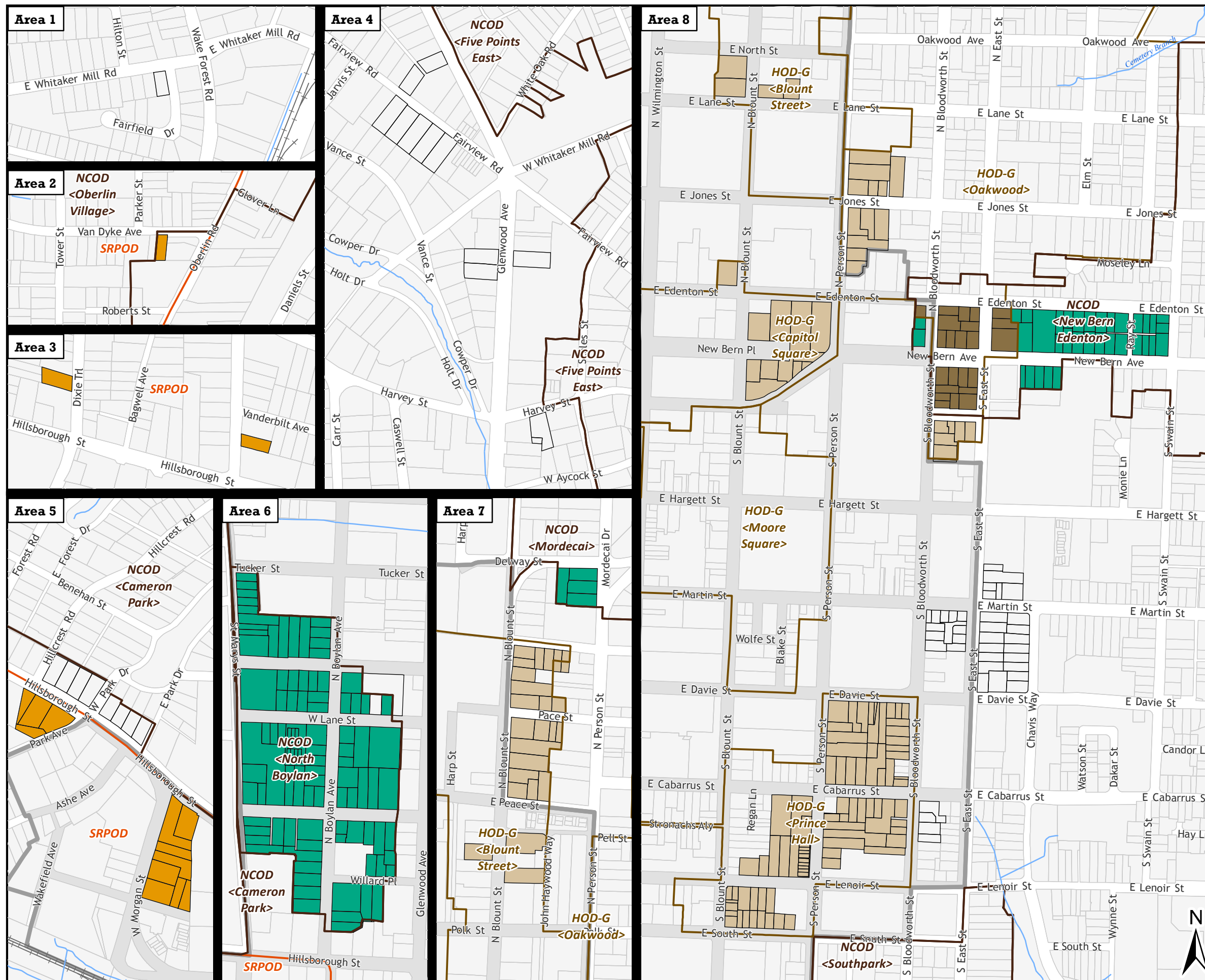
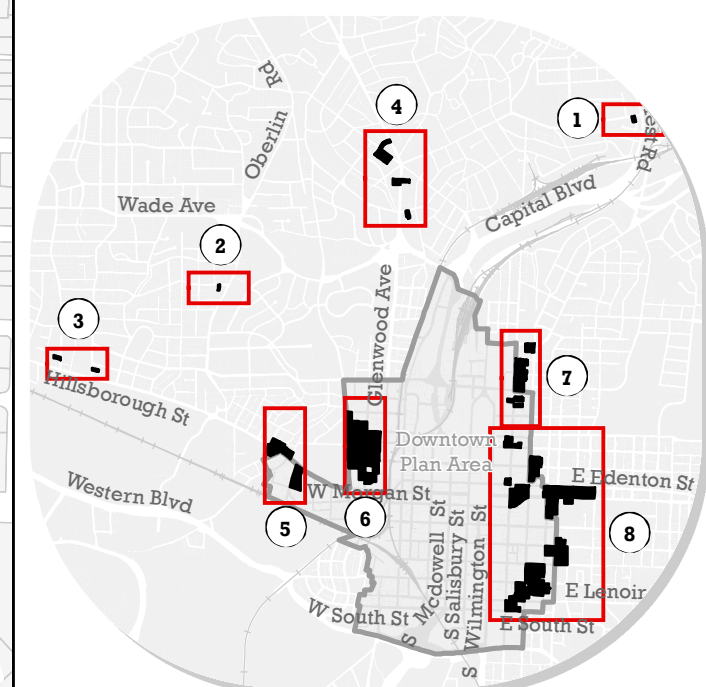


# Detached Frontage Overlay Zoning

- DE Properties
- Downtown Plan Area
- Overlay Zoning of -DE Parcels**
- HOD-G
- HOD-G & NCOD
- NCOD
- SRPOD

1 inch = 500 feet

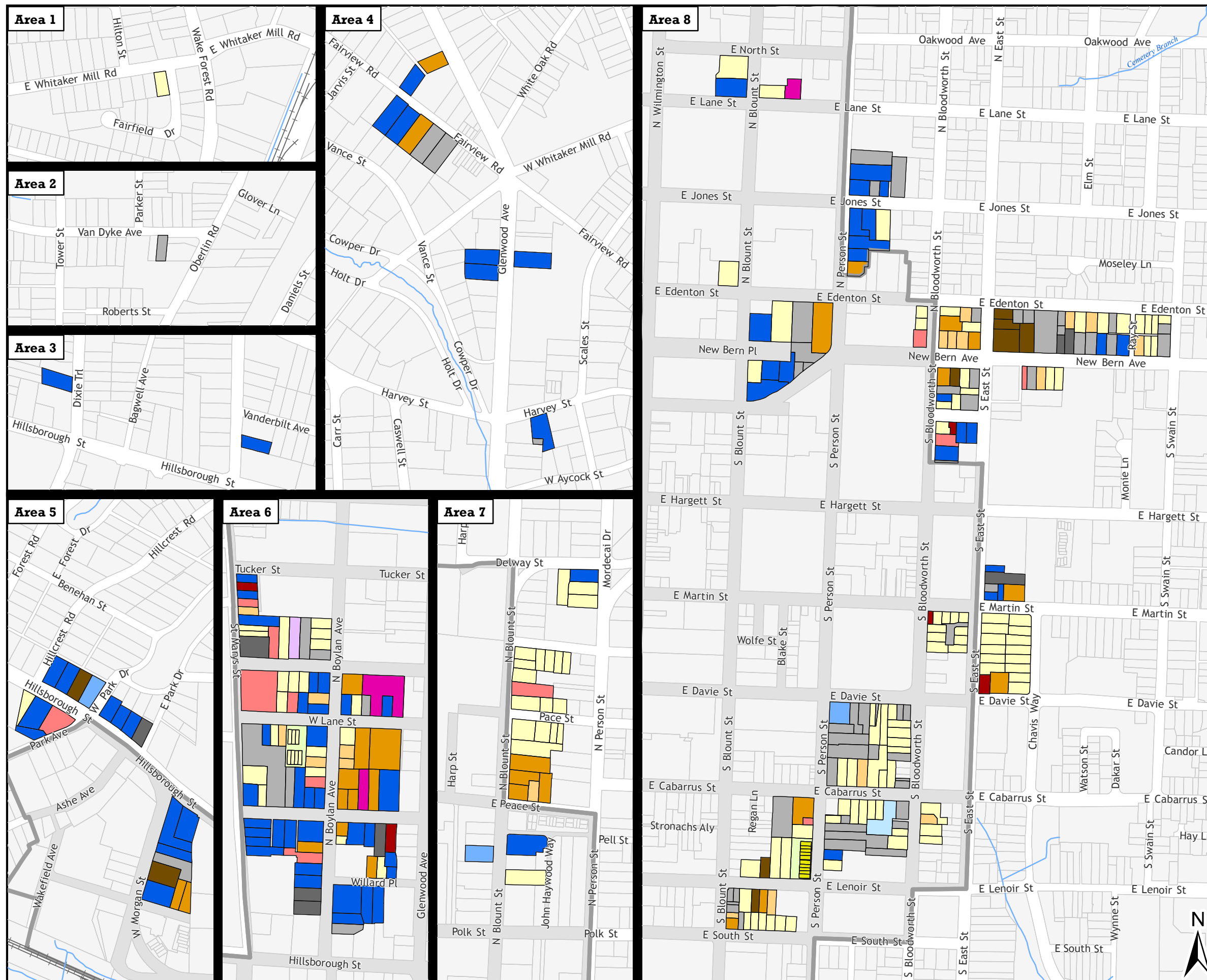
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# Detached Frontage Land Use



- |                             |                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| -DE Properties              | Day Care         |
| Downtown Plan Area          | Civic            |
| <b>-DE Property Use</b>     |                  |
| Single-unit Living          | Office           |
| Townhouse Living            | Mixed Use        |
| Two-unit Living             | Personal Service |
| Multi-unit Living           | Retail           |
| Group Living                | Light Industrial |
| Open Space in a Subdivision | Parking          |
|                             | Vacant           |

1 inch = 500 feet

0 125 250 500 750 1,000 Feet

